

# Project Startup Report

**Project Name:** UCIS Replacement Project

**Agency:** Unified Judicial Branch

**Business Unit/Program Area:** State Court Administrator's Office

**Project Sponsor:** Sally Holewa

**Project Manager:** Jim Gienger

## Project Description

Unified Court Information System (UCIS) is a system originally developed in Minnesota in the 1980's and was brought to Burleigh County in North Dakota in the early 1990's. From Burleigh County, the system has gradually evolved to become the single case management system used in all 53 of North Dakota's counties. With continual modifications, enhancements and maintenance provided to the system by the State Court Administrator's office, the UCIS of today is much different from the version brought to North Dakota some 18 years ago.

The Judicial Branch will develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking a qualified vendor to implement a Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) case management system (CMS) to replace the current UCIS that will yield business value in the following ways:

- Reduced risk
- Enhanced ease-of-use
- Reduced cost
- Enhanced level of service to North Dakota Judiciary and other stakeholders.

## Business Need or Problem

UCIS is a comprehensive case management system used to manage all aspects of cases within the courts of North Dakota. It enables and assists the clerks of court with proactive management of case related documents, schedules, calendars, parties to a case, notices and other case related items of all case types.

While UCIS has served and continues to serve the courts well, the time is fast approaching where the design, architecture and structure of UCIS will limit its ability to continue to meet the increasing needs of the Judicial Branch and the citizens of North Dakota. The State Court Administrator's Office (SCAO) recently contracted with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to help provide alternatives for the future of UCIS.

The NCSC report identified numerous areas that could be better served by a newer, more robust system and summarized the following needs:

1. The user interface used by UCIS is referred to as a "green screen". The users need a modern graphical interface to improve efficiency in case file processing and reduce training requirements.
2. The Judiciary and the citizens of North Dakota have increased demands for the ability to access information when they want, wherever they are, and in the format they need. UCIS, utilizing technologies available over 20 years ago, does not meet those demands. The court needs to have a system built with current database technologies and toolsets that provide the capabilities and flexibility to meet the requirements of all users.
3. UCIS was initially designed as a case management system and later modified to perform some financial management functions. The court needs a fully integrated financial module with comprehensive financial management, reporting, and controls in order to minimize the workload of the staff and eliminate many of the shadow systems currently used to manage the finances of the court.
4. UCIS does not include the varied and multiple layers of security needed to accommodate the numerous groups of people requesting access to UCIS data. The court needs a system that allows access of information based upon multiple and complex security requirements.

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Key Metrics		
Phase 1 Project Start Date	Estimated Length of Phase 1	Estimated Phase 1 Cost
October 2007	12 months	\$1,375,000
Phase 2 Project Start Date	Estimated Length of Phase 2	Estimated Phase 2 Cost
October 2008	33 months	\$4-6,000,000

Benefits to Be Achieved	
Phase 1 Project Objectives	Measurement Description
Capture and document business and technical requirements from the following portfolio teams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Flow</li> <li>Interfaces</li> <li>Administrative</li> </ul>	A matrix of all business and technical requirements will be created for incorporation into the RFP.
Release RFP by May 2, 2008 that includes, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms and Conditions</li> <li>Background Information</li> <li>Vendor Requirements</li> <li>Technical and Business Requirements</li> <li>Evaluation Criteria</li> </ul>	A complete RFP will be authored and released upon its review and approval by the Court and others, including ITD Policy and Planning.
Select vendor by October 2008	Through a defined evaluation process, a vendor will be selected for the implementation of a COTS solution.
Develop an implementation budget by early September	An implementation budget will be submitted to the next Legislative Assembly for their consideration.
Phase 2 Project Objectives	Measurement Description
Phase 2 objectives will be defined after a vendor is selected and during the Phase 2 (implementation phase) planning activities.	TBD

Cost/Benefit Analysis
<p>There are generally two reasons that an organization allocates resources to a technology project. The first is environmental (legislatively mandated or stakeholder driven), and the other being financial (the organization is expecting a significant return on their investment). Although a favorable Return on Investment (ROI) is anticipated with this project through significant efficiency gains by many stakeholders, the primary justification for implementing a new CMS is based on the environmental grounds. The technologies utilized within UCIS simply do not allow the court to meet all requirements currently identified. It is likely most requirements in the future will not be met with existing technologies in place.</p> <p>The anticipated benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effective training for new users, or refreshing of current users, because of the more intuitive nature of a graphical user interface in a new system</li> <li>More efficient performance of most tasks, on a daily basis, such as searching for persons and case-related data, scheduling events, recording results of events, notifying parties, and generally navigating through the system</li> <li>Increased ability to modify functions and configuration settings in the system, including more finely-tuned user role-based security, because of a more modern architecture</li> <li>Better financial control through integration of financial management with case management</li> <li>More flexibility to create forms, notices, orders and calendars with the wording customized for local needs</li> <li>Greater ability of judges and court administrators to get information out of the system through reports (both standard and ad hoc), made possible because of a more modern data structure built into the system</li> <li>Greater ability to incorporate new technology in the system, such as associating electronic files with court cases (document images, audio files of proceedings and evidence, and video), and electronic filing, because of the capabilities of more modern software development tools</li> <li>Greater ability to exchange data because of built-in capabilities of the software development environment for specifying data exchanges (application programming interfaces and electronic delivery of output)</li> <li>Litigants, other justice agencies, and the public receive faster and more accurate information concerning their case(s).</li> </ul>

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## Key Constraints or Risks

The key constraint identified for the project is:

- Implementation budget must be finalized by September 12, 2008 for approval consideration during the next Legislative session.

The key risks identified for the project are:

- Resource availability, coordination, and diversion. Insufficient resources mean that appropriately skilled individuals are not available when needed. Lack of necessary skills on the project team not only causes a shortage of resources needed to get the work done, but can reduce the productivity of other team members. Reassignment of team members to another team or to work outside the project is costly in terms of time lost in obtaining a replacement and learning curve for the replacement.
- User Resistance. District Court Judges and Trial Court staff may dislike the new business processes and blame the system, the project, or the staff working on the project for the change. Agency may experience staff turnover as a result.